

The Paraeducator and Teacher Team: Strategies for Success

This training program is designed to provide administrators, teachers, and paraeducators with knowledge of strategies for improved communication and team building.

Topics include:

Topic One: Creating a Positive School Environment
Team Membership
Brainstorming

Topic Two: Characteristics of Effective Teams
Advantages of the Team Concept

Topic Three: The Team Building Process
Assessing Team Performance

Topic Four: Developing a Team Mission Statement

Topic Five: Team Leadership

Topic Six: Team Meetings

Topic Seven: Team Personalities / Work Style Assessment

Topic Eight: Communication and Problem Solving

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Learning Objectives

The content of this notebook will prepare the paraeducator and teacher to:

1. Define communication, collaboration, and teamwork.
2. Identify communication skills that are for working with other team members.
3. Understand the importance of listening appropriately.
4. Explain the importance of problem solving as applies to school based teams.
5. Identify and apply the eight-step problem solving process.
6. Identify and give examples of the types of strategies used to seek, provide, and clarify information.
7. Describe the major purposes and importance of questions.
8. Discuss the nature and possible sources of conflict among team members.
9. Describe successful meetings and activities that contribute to their success.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

To be successful, the teacher and paraeducator must view themselves as a team and partners in the educational process. This workshop will present an overview of effective teamwork with a focus on paraeducator and teacher teams. Topics will include creating a positive environment, building a foundation for effective communication, role clarification, time management strategies, goal setting, and team leadership. Additional topics will include effective communication and meeting techniques, problem solving, and dealing with the different personalities and working styles found in a school environment.

A WINNING TEAM

The interdependent working relationship of today's paraeducators, teachers, and principals is often like a jigsaw puzzle. Unfortunately, they don't have a picture on the front of a box to know what the puzzle is supposed to look like when it's finished. Sometimes they don't even have all the pieces. That's why, in today's education climate, the most successful schools operate as a team. School personnel understand the importance of a good working relationship and are focused on good communication, trust, respect, and recognition. When paraeducators, teachers, and principals team up to connect the pieces of the puzzle, students are the ultimate beneficiaries.

1

2

Team Work: Key to Success for Teachers and Paraeducators

The changing landscape of public education has had a significant impact on the roles of the personnel who serve in our schools. Teacher shortages, increasing numbers of English language learners and the rising enrollment of students with disabilities and other special needs are just some of the factors that make the need for a dynamic school team more necessary than ever. In this challenging environment, paraeducators play an increasingly critical role in improving student achievement. (Gerlach, K.P. 2009, *Let's Team Up*, National Education Association)

A common thread across definitions of teams is that teamwork can be defined as a process among partners who share mutual goals and work together to achieve the goals. Teamwork allows people to discuss their work together and, as a result, to grow professionally.

To be successful, the teacher and the paraeducator must view themselves as a team and partners in the educational process. Input from all team members needs to be solicited. Questions need to be asked and answered. Ideas need to be shared. Teamwork doesn't happen by accident. It requires effort and commitment, a willingness to accept the challenges of working together. Teachers and paraeducators need to form a "relationship" that is built on good communication and mutual respect.

Team effectiveness can be achieved by sharing expectations with one another, by allowing the paraeducator to participate in the planning process, by appreciating each other's unique personality traits, by respecting diversity, and by demonstrating a positive attitude toward teamwork. Once a team works well together, the job is less stressful, more enjoyable, and more rewarding for all team members.

According to a review of research on team effectiveness done by Abelson and Woodman (1983), a team that has just formed usually has some or all of the following characteristics:

1. There is considerable confusion as to roles that team members must assume.
2. There is confusion as to the social and professional relationships among members of the team.
3. Individuals have some assets or competencies relative to the team's purpose. However, some people may be unaware of how their skills or knowledge relate to team goals. Perhaps more importantly, some individuals may be unaware of (or may not value) the strengths and competencies of others, or may not appreciate their relationship to team goals.
4. While there may be some understanding of short-range goals (e.g., why the team was brought together), understanding of long-range goals is likely to be more elusive.
5. In the absence of established norms, rules or policy, there is considerable confusion about how the team will operate, how decisions will be made, and so on.
6. Team members (and particularly leaders) do not pay much early attention to social and professional relationships, being more likely to focus initially on the task.

These characteristics are important for us to consider when focusing on the teacher-paraeducator team.

If a team is to be effective, the team must agree on the team's purpose. Members must see the benefits of working together. The mission and goals of the team must be developed with input from all team members. Roles and responsibilities of both the teacher and paraeducator must be clearly defined. Clear expectations are given by the supervising teacher in order to get the job done. Information is shared in a timely manner, and the time the team meets together is effective and productive.

Teaming depends on effective communication. Effective communication expresses a team member's beliefs, ideas, needs, or feelings. For effective team performance, "communication" must facilitate the free flow or exchange of ideas, information and instruction that contribute to common understanding.

When ideas are shared, there is opportunity for evaluation and input that can build even better ideas. From each new experience, more ideas can be developed and tried. Successful communication results in a mutual understanding of what was sent and what was heard.

Open communication, mutual respect, recognition, and above all, trust form the bond of a healthy team. Trust is built in teams by promoting open communications, providing fair leadership and supervising with sensitivity. (Pickett, A., Gerlach, K., 2004)

Building trust is essential and not always easy. Trust is necessary to have a productive working environment. It is essential for all team members to practice open, honest communication in order to increase awareness and build cooperation. This environment of trust promotes loyalty and commitment to achieve the goals and objectives of the team.

All team members need to develop listening skills so that they can obtain sufficient and accurate information necessary for an effective working relationship. Because many paraeducators have received limited training or orientation for their job, it is especially important that the teacher accurately and clearly describe the goals and needs of the learner being served. Team members must have effective listening techniques in order to promote the essential understanding required for successful intervention.

The best teams are also clear on their goals and how each person contributes to reaching them. Clear role clarification is a major part of the success of the team.

Successful teams have a clear understanding of their goals. The elements of a goal include (a) what is to be achieved, (b) a measure of accomplishment – *how will we know when the outcome has been reached?* And, (c) the time factor – *when precisely do we want to have the goal completed?* All team members must agree on the goals of their efforts. These efforts would also include supporting one another.

By focusing on goals, priorities can be established much more easily. Together, the teacher and other professional practitioners and the paraeducator determine what needs to be done, by whom, and by what deadline.

As noted previously, both school professionals and paraeducators need to be aware and understand their roles in getting tasks done and teachers need to know how to use the skills and expertise of each member most effectively. Several factors need to be considered in determining the roles and responsibilities of team members. They include experience, training, comfort level, time constraints, and knowledge levels of individual team members. In determining roles for the paraeducator team, professional and ethical considerations are important considerations.

Leadership is a critical factor for team success. The leader is always the teacher or another school professional who has been designated as the paraeducator's supervisor. The supervisor's role is similar to that of a coach. It involves assessing the paraeducator's skills and helping the paraeducator use them to the fullest. Paraeducators contribute more effectively when they are "coached" and encouraged to make optimal use of their strengths and resources. A supervisor provides direction and ideas, helps identify alternatives, raises questions, and supplies feedback.

Creating a Positive School Environment: A Summary of Research

The following is a summary of what educational research tells us about effective classroom environments with a focus on classroom management:

1. Mutual trust and respect between the teacher and student.
2. Clear definition of classroom roles, responsibilities, and rules.
3. A feeling on the part of the students that they belong to the group.
4. A climate where it is safe for students to express feelings.
5. A climate where students receive recognition, acceptance, and appreciation.
6. A climate where individual differences and cultural differences are respected.
7. A climate where students establish helpful interpersonal relationships.
8. A climate that expresses support, respect, and caring for one another.
9. A positive classroom climate where students are involved.
10. A climate that supports a learning environment.

Discussion: What does this mean for school staff? Rewrite the above statements focusing on school staff and the teacher/paraeducator team.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

-- Kent Gerlach

Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

Research has shown that there is no single thing that schools can do to ensure student learning. High performing schools do however tend to have the following nine characteristics in common:

1. Clear and Shared Focus

Everybody knows where they are going and why. The vision is shared – everybody is involved and all understand their roles in achieving the vision. The vision is developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent focus.

2. High Standards and Expectations

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and that they can teach all students. There is recognition of barriers for some students to overcome, but the barriers are not insurmountable. Students become engaged in an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

3. Effective School Leadership

Effective leadership is required to implement change processes within the school. This leadership takes many forms. Principals often play this role, but so do teachers and other staff, including those in the district office. Effective leaders advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

4. High Levels of Collaboration and Communication

There is constant collaboration and communication between teachers of all grades. Everybody is involved and connected, including parents and members of the community, to solve problems and solve problems.

5. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards

Curriculum is aligned with the Essential Learning Requirements (EALRs). Research-based materials and teaching and learning strategies are implemented. There is a clear understanding of the assessment system, what is measured in various assessments and how it is measured.

6. Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning are continually adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. A variety of assessment procedures are used. The results of the assessment are used to improve student performances and also improve the instruction program.

7. Focused Professional Development

Professional development for all educators is aligned with the school's and district's common focus, objectives, and high expectations. It is ongoing and based on high need areas.

8. Supportive Learning Environment

The school has a safe civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff, and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

9. High Level of Community and Parent Involvement

There is a sense that all educational stakeholders have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Parents, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

Washington State OSPI, June 2003 (1ST Edition), June 2007 (2nd Edition)

Discussion Exercise: Members of Your Team

Throughout this training, you will need to focus on a team that you are presently a member. The emphasis of this material is directed towards the teacher-paraeducator team. List your team members below.

Who is the leader or supervisor of this team? _____

Does the leadership or supervision of this team ever change? _____

If you wish to identify another team (example, committee, etc.) you are a member of, do so below using the same procedure.

Think about the membership of the team(s) you identified above. Are you able to list each team member's role and responsibilities? Have the roles of each team member been clarified?

What strengths (contributions) does each member bring to the team?

Paper Cup Exercise

The intended purpose of using a paper cup would be to hold liquid, drink from it, and then disposing of it.

- A. List other ways of using a paper cup under column A.
- B. Share your ideas with your partner. Write these ideas under column B.
- C. Compare the results.

INDIVIDUAL (A) (you)	TEAM (B)

What did you learn from this exercise?

What are the advantages of working together?

Discussion Exercise: Advantages of Team Concept

Define the term “Paraeducator” and/or “Paraprofessional.”

*NOTE – “Para” means along side of.

What are the advantages of a team “approach for both the teacher and paraeducator?”

Identify reasons why working together as a “team” is important. Discuss the benefits for:

- A. Team members
- B. Paraeducators
- C. Supervising teachers
- D. Students
- E. The school district
- F. Parents and families

Definitions of a Paraeducator

A paraeducator is a school employee who assists and supports teacher-directed instruction (Gerlach, K., 2001)

Paraeducators are school/agency employees who work under the supervision of teachers or other professional practitioners. The certified professional is responsible for the design, implementation, and assessment of learner progress, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of learning programs. (Pickett, 1989)

The **paraprofessional** is an employee who, following appropriate training performs tasks as prescribed and supervised by the licensed/certified professional/practitioner. Paraprofessionals perform specific duties as directed by the licensed/certified professional/practitioner. The licensed/certified professional/practitioner maintains responsibility for assessing the learner and family needs, and for planning, evaluating, and modifying programs. (IDEA Partnerships Paraprofessional Initiative Report to U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Special Programs [OSEP], December 2001.)

Paraeducators provide services, under supervision, in the following programmatic areas:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ... Educational programs, including behavior programs | ... Physical therapy |
| ... Occupational therapy | ... Speech and language therapy |
| ... Early intervention and pre-school programs | ... Recreation programs |
| ... Social work/case management | ... Parent training/child find programs |
| ... Vocational training programs and job coaching | ... Playground, lunchroom, library |
| ... Computer assistance | ... Health assistance |
| ... One-to-one instruction (Interpreters, etc) | ... Library |
| | ... After school programs |

Can you think of other program areas?

Other Terms Used by School Districts

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ... paraprofessional | ... inclusion assistant |
| ... parapro | ... one to one assistant |
| ... instructional aide | ... one to one aide |
| ... instructional assistant | ... support aide |
| ... educational aide (E A) | ... support assistant |
| ... educational assistant (E.A.) | ... facilitator |
| ... teachers aide (T.A.) | ... behavioral assistant |
| ... teachers assistant (T.A.) | ... classified staff |
| ... helping assistant | ... para |
| ... education technician | ... support personnel |
| ... teaching assistant | |

Advantages of Teamwork

- * Teams build an awareness of interdependence. When people recognize the benefits of helping one another, and realize it is expected; they will work together to achieve common goals.
- * When people work together to achieve common goals they stimulate each other to higher levels of accomplishment; fresh ideas are generated.
- * Teamwork builds and reinforces recognition and mutual support within a team. People have an opportunity to see the effect of their effort and the efforts of others on student achievement.
- * Collaboration leads to commitment to support and accomplish student and team goals.
- * Teams develop unique, creative, and flexible solutions to problems.
- * Teams foster professional and personal growth by sharing knowledge and skills.
- * Teams reduce the feeling of isolation that is common in education.
- * Teams support and mentor each other.
- * Teams maximize each member's potential, strengths, and contribution.
- * Teams establish goals together. Members feel a sense of ownership toward goals. Input is solicited from all team members.
- * Members are encouraged to openly express ideas, opinions, disagreement, and feelings. Questions are welcomed.
- * Team members practice open and honest communication. They make an effort to understand each other's points of view. They operate in a climate of trust and respect.
- * Members participate in discussions affecting the team but understand their supervisor or leader must make the final decision.
- * A team spirit develops, when members work well together.

© Pickett, A.L., Gerlach, K., *Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings*, 2003, Pro*ed, Austin, TX. Figure 5.1. Advantages of "The Team" Concept.

Discussion Exercise: Brainstorming

Define brainstorming. What is the purpose of brainstorming?

List some “Rules for Brainstorming.”

Think about a certain issue or problem your team is currently dealing with. Use the brainstorming process to generate ideas.

- a. Identify the problem or issue
- b. Brainstorm solutions or ideas

T.I.L.I. Team Communication Strategy

This is a communication strategy used when team members need to do some individual thinking before sharing thought with other team members. The objective is for the team to write a synthesized answer that combines everyone’s good ideas.

1. **Think it** (Individual team member thinks about the issue or problem ahead of time.)
2. **Ink it** (Each member jots down their own individual thoughts on paper ahead of time.)
3. **Link it** (Each team member shares their thoughts and ideas – they then brainstorm their ideas.)
4. **Ink it** (A final consensus answer is written by the team.)

How could this skill be used effectively with the Teacher-Paraeducator team? Give an example.

Discussion Exercise: Defining “Team” and “Collaboration”

Working alone, define team and collaboration. Together with a partner, share your definition and come to a consensus.

Individual Definition	Team Definition
A team is: 	A team is:
Individual Definition	Team Definition
Collaboration is: 	Collaboration is:

Keep your definitions simple and to the point!

Consensus Definition

Team: 	Collaboration:
--	---

TEAM

**TWO OR MORE PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER
TOWARD A COMMON GOAL.
THEIR PURPOSE OR MISSION IS CLEAR.**

COLLABORATION: The defined process of team communication.

It is the expectations we have for one another.

Collaboration is a general term that describes an interactive process whereby persons with diverse backgrounds and expertise jointly agree to work together to generate creative solutions to mutually defined issues. Mutual trust, respect, and open communication characterize collaboration.

COLLABORATION – a process of joining together to work on tasks in a cooperative, respectful, and purposeful manner.

K. Gerlach, 2005

A. Brainstorm the characteristics of an “effective team.”

A. Brainstorm the characteristics of an “effective team.”

B. Analyze your own team effectiveness using the characteristics you have identified.

C. In order to improve your teams effectiveness, what changes or improvements may need to be made?

Ten Characteristics of Effective Teams: From Business Research Journals

1. **PURPOSE** – Members understanding why the team exists and is committed to accomplishing the mission of the team. Team goals are clear.
2. **PRIORITIES** – Members know what needs to be done, by whom, and by when to achieve team goals.
3. **ROLES** – Members know their roles in getting tasks done and how to use the skills and expertise of each member most effectively. Leadership is clearly established.
4. **DECISIONS** – Authority and decision-making lines are clearly understood.
5. **CONFLICT** – Conflict or differences of opinion is dealt with openly and is considered important to decision-making and personal growth.
6. **PERSONALITY TRAITS** – Members feel their unique personalities are appreciated and well utilized.
7. **INPUT AND SUPPORT** – Members are able to share risky ideas and they give input into discussions. There is a supportive atmosphere.
8. **EFFECTIVENESS** – Members find team meetings efficient and productive and look forward to this time together. Teams meet on a regular schedule.
9. **SUCCESS** – Members know clearly when the team has met with success and share in this equally and proudly.
10. **TRAINING** – Opportunities for feedback and updating skills are provided and taken advantage of by team members.

We have learned that:

- * Teams use their time and talents effectively.
- * Teams are committed to skill development.
- * Members build morale by showing respect and recognition to one another.
- * Members give one another feedback.
- * Members cooperate rather than competing.
- * Members maintain positive attitudes toward each other's ideas.
- * Teams communicate openly.
- * Members mentor and learn from one another.
- * Teams resolve conflicts effectively.
- * Teams accept challenges.

Discussion Exercise: Frustrations

Identify the issues or frustrations you might experience when working together with others in a group. Example: when people aren't prepared.

Discussion Exercise: "Work group" and "Team" Differences

List the differences between a "work group" and a "team."

Work Group	Team
<i>Example: A workgroup has individual goals.</i>	<i>Example: A team has group goals.</i>

Differences Between a “Work Group” and a “Team.”

Work Group	Team
Members may or may not participate in decisions affecting the team. Conformity often appears more important than positive results.	Members participate in decisions affecting the team, but understand their leader or supervisor must make the final ruling. Positive results, not conformity, are the goal of the team.
Members often find themselves in conflict situations, which they do not know how to resolve. Their supervisor may put off intervention until serious damage is done.	Members recognize conflict is a normal aspect of human interaction, but they view such situations as an opportunity for new ideas and creativity. They work to resolve conflict quickly and constructively.
Members may receive training, but are limited in applying it to the job by supervisors or other group members.	Members are encouraged to develop skills and apply what they learn on the job. They receive support of the team. They are encouraged to update their skills and take part in professional development opportunities.
Members are so cautious about what they say that real understanding is not possible. Game playing could occur. Members are afraid to ask questions.	Members practice open and honest communication. They make an effort to understand each other's point of view. Input is solicited. Asking questions is encouraged.
Members distrust the motives of colleagues because they do not understand the role of the other members. Expressions of opinion or disagreement may be considered divisive or non-supportive.	Members work in a climate of trust and are encouraged to openly express ideas, opinions, disagreements, and feelings. Questions are welcomed. Team members feel respected and valued.
Suggestions are not encouraged and input is not solicited from team members.	Members contribute to success by applying their unique talents and knowledge to team objectives. Input is encouraged.
Members tend to focus on themselves because they are not sufficiently involved in planning the unit's objectives. They approach their job simply as an individual.	Members feel a sense of ownership for their jobs and the program because they are committed to goals they helped establish.
Members think they are grouped together for administrative purposes only.	Members recognize their interdependence and understand both personal and team goals are best accomplished with mutual support.
Individuals work independently, sometimes at cross-purposes with others.	Time is not wasted struggling over “turf” or attempting personal gain at the expense of others.

Seven Steps for Building on Effective Team Development

The Team Building Process

Step 1: Establish team composition.

Step 2: Define the purpose and goals of the team.

Step 3: Clarify roles and responsibilities.

Step 4: Establish team rules (norms).

Step 5: Integrate individual personalities and strengths.

Step 6: Manage team performance (leadership).

Step 7: Evaluate team effectiveness.

*©Pickett, A L, Gerlach, K., 2003, Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings, Austin, Texas, Pro*ed*

A Team Must Have ...

- 1. Mutual goals**
- 2. *Perceived need* for interdependent working relationship**
- 3. Commitment to a team effort**
- 4. Role clarification**
- 5. Effective leadership**
- 6. Good communication**
- 7. Trust**
- 8. Respect, recognition**
- 9. Time to communicate**
- 10. Support**

**TEAMS WITH
GOALS
SUCCEED
BECAUSE THEY
KNOW WHERE
THEY'RE GOING**

Discussion Exercise: Effective Teams, an Assessment (Part A)

Circle yes, no, needs improvement to the following questions:

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|----|-------------------|
| 1. | We are all in agreement about what we are to do here. Our mission is clear. Goals are established. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 2. | The team shares a clear vision of what needs to be done to accomplish the goals. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 3. | Roles and responsibilities of each team member are clearly established. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 4. | The team leadership role is clear. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 5. | Team expectations are communicated in a climate of trust and openness. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 6. | The team knows each person's role in any decisions that have to be made. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 7. | The team is clear about what we expect from each other in order to get the job done. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 8. | Team members keep one another informed of issues affecting the team. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 9. | The team listens to each other's ideas. Input is solicited from all team members. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 10. | Team members recognized and appreciated for the work we do. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 11. | The team has a set meeting time. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 12. | The meeting time is effective and productive. | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |
| 13. | The team is productive and proud of our accomplishments (team spirit). | Yes | No | Needs Improvement |

From Pickett, A. L., Gerlach, K. (2003) *Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings*. Austin, TX, Pro*ed

**Effective teams should be able to answer yes to all of the above questions.
Based on this assessment, our team can improve in the following areas:**

Discussion Exercise: Team Assessment

YES	NO	
		Do all team members understand team goals?
		Are all team members committed to these goals?
		Are team members concerned and interested in each other?
		Do team members have the emotional maturity to acknowledge and confront conflict openly?
		Do team members listen to others with openness and understanding?
		Do all team members value one another's contributions?
		Do team members feel comfortable contributing ideas and solutions to problems?
		Do team members recognize and reward team performance?
		Do team members encourage and appreciate comments about team efforts?
		Are team meetings held at a place where all have equal eye contact?
		Are team meetings held at a specific time?
		Are team meetings held at a location free from interruption?
		Is the spirit of cooperation stronger than the spirit of completion among team members?
		Is leadership effective?
		Does everyone feel free to level and be candid with everyone else?
		Do team members "check things out" with supervisor before making decisions?
		Is constructive feedback given freely to improve decision-making?
		Is information shared willingly?
		Are team members willing to communicate their concerns?
		Do team meetings end with a sense of accomplishment and/or on a positive note?

Discussion Exercise: Team Assessment

In discussing the effectiveness of our team, we feel our team communicates very well on the following:

Our team could improve our communication in the following areas:

Develop a plan for team improvement and communication.

Discussion Exercise: Individual Exercise

BUILDING TRUST EMPOWERS TEAMS

Restructuring efforts demand a high level of trust among team members to enable them to share information openly and develop creative plans for helping students. As a start toward increasing their level of trust, team members can use the following survey to identify those areas where they need more work.

	Seldom	Frequently	Always
1. I contribute facts, opinions, and suggestions during team discussions.			
2. I express willingness to cooperate with others and expect their cooperation.			
3. My dealings with the entire team are open and candid.			
4. I support members when they struggle to express themselves.			
5. I offer help to anyone in the team in an effort to improve the team's performance.			
6. I listen receptively to others and avoid judging them as "right" or "wrong."			
7. I avoid evaluating other members' contributions on the basis of whether these contributions are useful to me.			
8. I take risks in expressing my feelings and new ideas.			
9. I let other team members know I appreciate their talents, skills, and resources.			
10. I share materials, information, and other resources to promote the success of all members.			

Adapted from material prepared by the Southern Carolina State Department of Education; and, Gerlach, K., Reisberg, I. 1992, Strengthening the Partnership, Communication and Teaming, 2nd Edition, Olympic ESD #114

Discussion Exercise: Role Clarification

Comparison of Teacher and Paraeducator Roles

Read the role description of the supervising teacher, and then write the job description for the paraeducator. **Use team words in writing the role of the paraeducator.**

	Role performed by the supervising teacher	Role performed by the paraeducator
Classroom Organization	Plans weekly schedule Plans lessons/activities for entire class, individual children and paraeducator. Plans room arrangement and learning centers	
Assessment	Assesses individual children Administers tests to entire class	
Setting Objectives	Determines appropriate objectives for class and for individual children	
Teaching	Teaches lessons for the entire class, small groups, and individual children	
Behavior Management	Plans behavior management strategies for entire class and for individual children	
Working with Parents	Meets with parents Initiates conferences with parents concerning child's progress	
Lesson Planning	Plans lessons for students Plans for the paraeducator	
Building Classroom Partnership	Arranges schedule for conferences, shares goals & philosophy with paraeducator, organizes job duties for paraeducator	

Adapted from Gerlach, Kent, Ed D and Pickett, A.I., (1992) Strengthening the Partnership: Issues, Roles and Responsibilities

Are the team words you used reflected in your district's paraeducator job descriptions?

Developing Mission and Goal Statements

- ❖ A group is not a team until the members have a common purpose.
- ❖ Every team needs a *clearly* stated mission.
- ❖ The mission is the team's statement of purpose. Goals are where the team wants to be at a certain time.
- ❖ Mission provides direction while goals are specific developments.

Teams are characterized by a common purpose and mutually defined norms of behavior and conduct. Purpose is frequently defined as your team's **MISSION**. Your team's mission should include who you are, what you will do, why this is your purpose, and how it will be accomplished.

In the next exercise you will use both the skills of brainstorming and of consensus building. You should first agree on the general purpose of the team. What issues or problems you will address in your team. Use your districts and/or buildings mission statement to develop your team's purpose.

The facilitator should lead the group in **BRAINSTORMING** all aspects of mission. Record all ideas. Next, the team should go back and evaluate the statements, identifying those that they feel should be included. The team must reach its goal through consensus.

Common Terms Used in Mission Statements:

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Mission	A statement of what the school district or team is about and the unique contribution it can make.
Goal	A result to be achieved.
Objective	A specific point of measurement that the team intends to meet in pursuit of its goals.
Strategy	A set of rules and guidelines to assist orderly progression toward a team's goals and objectives.
Plan	A time-phased action sequence used to guide and coordinate strategies in pursuit of objectives.

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Discussion Exercise: Setting and Defining Your Team's Mission

Brainstorm words you feel would be important to include in your team's mission statement:

Brainstorm ideas for a mission statement for your team and/or program:

Write your team's mission statement or write your program mission statement:

Note: Be prepared to share your mission statements with other workshop participants. Post this mission statement and review it frequently.

Discussion Exercise: Leadership Qualities

Think of an effective supervisor or leader that you are presently working with or that you have worked for in the past. What makes this person so effective? List their characteristics below:

What are the characteristics of an effective team member?

Note the similarities of effective team leaders and effective team members.

Team Leadership Skills

Teamwork skills: the ability of the supervisor to interface with the paraeducator in a manner that promotes teamwork and develops commitment.

Communication skills: the ability to provide and receive information in an effective manner.

Problem-solving skills: the ability to identify problems and propose, evaluate, and analyze alternative solutions in order to develop ways of implementing the plan.

Interpersonal skills: the ability to recognize and demonstrate appropriate social behaviors, work with different interpersonal styles and appreciate the uniqueness of others, and manage conflict.

Feedback skills: the ability of the supervisor to monitor performance of the paraeducator through appropriate observation and feedback to ensure team effectiveness.

Technical and management skills: the ability to understand the mission of the team and program. The supervising professional must schedule, plan, and manage time, and handle the unexpected.

Delegating skills: the ability to communicate responsibilities effectively to the paraeducator.

Coordinating and planning skills: the ability to see that roles and responsibilities are scheduled appropriately, resources are available when needed, and conferences and meetings are used to their fullest advantage.

An Effective Team Leader

- ◆ Understands and is committed to TEAM goals
- ◆ Is friendly, concerned, and interested in others
- ◆ Acknowledges and confronts conflict openly
- ◆ Listens to others with understanding
- ◆ Includes others in the decision-making process
- ◆ Contributes ideas and solutions
- ◆ Values the ideas and contributions of others
- ◆ Recognizes and rewards team efforts
- ◆ Encourages and appreciates comments about team performance

*Adapted from © Pickett, A L Gerlach K. 2003 Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings Austin, Texas, Pro*ed*

Discussion Exercise: Mentoring

A. How would you describe a “mentor?”

B. How could a teacher be a good mentor to a paraeducator?

C. How could a paraeducator mentor another paraeducator? Give an example.

D. How could an experienced paraeducator mentor a teacher?

The Teacher as Mentor

Mentoring Encourages Human Growth

The teachers who serve as mentors to paraeducators share their knowledge and skills with paraeducators. This is invaluable to the paraeducator.

Mentoring is a process whereby mentor and mentee work together to discover and develop the mentee's abilities to provide the mentee with knowledge and skills as opportunities and needs arise, and for the mentor to serve as an effective leader and tutor.

The teacher as a mentor should:

1. Set expectations of the paraeducators performance
2. Offer challenging ideas
3. Help build self-confidence
4. Encourage ethical and professional behavior
5. Offer support
6. Actively listen
7. Teach by example
8. Provide growth experience
9. Ask questions and give explanations
10. Coach the paraeducator
11. Encourage the paraeducator
12. Inspire the paraeducator
13. Share critical knowledge
14. Assist, observe, and demonstrate
15. Direct and delegate effectively
16. Counsel when necessary
17. Give clear, concise directions

Discussion Exercise

Share with your partner how you were mentored by another team member.

Discussion Exercise: Effective Meetings

Think about meetings you've attended that were very effective. What made them effective?

In your role as a supervising teacher, or your role as a paraeducator, what are your expectations for the other members of the team? Write these down, and then share.

Meeting Expectations:

Teacher (supervisor)	Paraeducator

The leader of the Paraeducator-Teacher Team is always the one with the teaching certificate or license.

Action Plan for

Date: _____

Supervising Teacher: _____

Paraeducator: _____

Other Staff: _____

Action Person	Responsible	Deadline

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Sample Meeting Planning Guide for the Team

<p>OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE (What the end of the meeting should achieve.)</p>	
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION Information already known. Further information needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ deadlines■ resources	
<p>PREPARATION Background information needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ How should paraeducators prepare for meeting?■ How should the teacher prepare for the meeting?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Date■ Start time■ End time■ Location■ Support material needed (e.g., handouts, equipment, lesson plans, etc.)	
<p>ALWAYS PRIORITIZE THE AGENDA (the most important items need to be discussed first)</p>	

Sample of Meeting Documentation Guide

This meeting guide provides a means of planning and recording the results of regular meetings between teachers and paraeducators. The purpose is to facilitate more efficient communication between the teacher and paraeducator.

Time: _____ Date _____ / _____ / _____ Site: _____

PREPARATION FOR MEETING – Who is to bring what?

Teacher:

Paraeducator:

TOPICS/AGENDA – What is going to take place?

1.

2.

3.

4.

DISCUSSION RECORD – What took place at the meeting?

RESOLUTION/ASSIGNMENT – What will we do?

Adapted from Vasa, S F., Steckelberg, A L. & Hoffman, P., 1986, Resource Guide for the Development of Policies and Practices in the Use of Paraprofessionals in Special Education, Lincoln, Nebraska: Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders, University of Nebraska

Team Rules (Norms)

The norms of a team are the team's common beliefs regarding appropriate behavior for members; they tell, in other words, the expectations of team members. All teams have norms, set either formally or informally.

Team norms help a team maintain behavioral consistency among its members.

Norms cannot be imposed on a team, but rather develop out of the interaction among members. Norms are social products.

Guidelines for the Establishment of Team Rules (Norms):

1. For members to accept team norms, they must recognize that they exist, see that the other members accept and follow them, and feel some internal commitment to them.
2. Members should accept and internalize norms to the extent that they see them as helping accomplish the goals and tasks to which they are committed.
3. Members will accept and internalize norms for which they feel a sense of ownership. Generally, team members will support and accept norms that they have helped set up.
4. Appropriate models and examples for conforming to the team norms should be present.
5. Norms that promote goal accomplishment and team maintenance and growth should be a focus of the team.
6. Because norms exist to help team effectiveness, they should be flexible so that at any time more appropriate norms can be substituted.

Adapted from Joining Together by David Johnson and Frank Johnson

Discussion Exercise: Developing Team Norms

Develop team norms or expectations for your teacher-paraeducator team meetings. You may use any of the examples from the next two pages if you feel they would be appropriate for your team.

As a team we agree to:

Effective Meeting Procedures

We agree:

- Team members will be present and punctual at all meetings.
- Team members will come prepared to meetings.
- Team members will ask questions if issues are unclear.
- Team members will contribute to the development of trust and openness.
- Team members will assume the responsibility to address concerns or ask for clarification.
- Team members will assume the responsibility that their verbal contributions will move the team forward and will be pertinent to the topic.
- Team members will contribute to the goals of the team.

Expectations of Team Members

We agree:

- Decisions will be summarized at the end of each meeting.
- Each team member assumes a responsibility to communicate during the meeting.
- Each team member assumes the responsibility that his/her verbal contributions will move the team forward and be pertinent to the topic.
- The supervisor starts each meeting by building the agenda.
- Each team member assumes the responsibility to address concerns or to ask for clarification at the appropriate time.
- The team will spend time identifying problems before moving to solutions.
- Define the proposal/problem/concern or focus before discussion.
- When possible, distribute pertinent printed material or plans before the meeting to allow for reflection.
- Listen without interrupting.
- Contribute to the development of trust and openness.
- Appropriate humor is encouraged.
- Team members will schedule around meeting time, arrive on time, and assist in concluding the meeting at the designated time.
- These procedures will be revisited whenever necessary.

Adapted from © Pickett, A L., Gerlach, K., 2004, *Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings*, Austin, Texas, Pro*ed. Figure 5.4. Sample Expectations Of Team Members

Loyalty

Loyalty means we will faithfully adhere to the intent and purpose of our operating principles. It does not mean we agree on every issue: dialogue, divergent thinking, and debate will encourage the best decisions. To clarify this principle, we have agreed that:

- We will be loyal to one another and to our common purpose as a team.
- When we disagree, we will focus on issues, not people. We will be open and honest. Each of us will use a process to resolve conflicts, which is fair, just, and sensitive to the integrity of others.
- When we find ourselves in disagreement with another team member, a meeting with that person will be arranged to resolve the issue. When the session ends, the resolved issue is to remain a private matter, unresolved issues may be referred to the next level of responsibility. We can agree to disagree.
- Once the final decision is reached, we will support the decision and aid in its implementation.
- The leader of the team is always the supervisor. The team recognizes that the paraeducator should follow the directions given by the supervisor and gives input into those directions.

Adapted from Lake Washington School District Meeting Rules

Collegiality and Support

In all of our working relationships, we commit ourselves to the success of others by:

- Providing support for each other professionally and personally;
- Dealing with each other honestly and truthfully;
- Respecting and protecting each other's integrity;
- Providing safety and security for honesty and truthfulness in our relationships with others;
- Maintaining a positive attitude;
- Celebrating successes;
- Keeping a balanced perspective;
- Sharing ideas for mutual success; and
- Confronting in a positive way.
- Respect confidentiality.

Adapted from Lake Washington School District Meeting Rules

Paraeducator Ethical Standards

Can we agree to these norms? Rewrite as necessary.

1. Practice the standards of professional and ethical conduct approved by the school/district agency.
2. Recognize and respect the roles of teachers as supervisors and team leaders.
3. Recognize and respect the differences in the roles of teachers, other professional practitioners, and paraeducators.
4. Recognize the teacher's responsibilities for planning learner programs, modifying curriculum and instruction, assessing learner progress, and developing behavior management programs.
5. Perform tasks that are within an identified scope of responsibility for paraeducators in different position levels.
6. Share information with parents about their child's performance as directed by the supervising teacher.
7. Refer concerns expressed by learners or others to the supervising teacher or other professional practitioner.
8. Share appropriate information about learner's performance, behavior, progress, and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting.
9. Discuss confidential issues and school problems only with the supervising teacher or designated personnel.
10. Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all learner's, families, and staff members.
11. Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a learner's disability, race, sex, cultural background or religion.
12. Follow the guidelines established by the district agency to protect the health, safety, and well being of all learners and staff.
13. Represent the school district or agency in a positive manner.
14. Follow the chain of command established by the district to address policy questions, system issues, and personnel practices.
15. When problems cannot be resolved, utilize the agency's grievance procedure.
16. Participate with administrators and other stakeholders in creating and implementing comprehensive systems of professional development for paraeducators.
17. Participate in continuing staff development.
18. Know school policies and procedures.

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Do You Know the Tate Team*?

There is DIC TATE who wants to run everything, while RO TATE tries to change everything. AGI TATE stirs up plenty of trouble, with help from their friend, IRRI TATE.

Whenever team changes are suggested, HESI TATE and VEGE TATE want to wait until next year. Then there is IMI TATE, who wants us to be like all the others.

DEVAS TATE provides the voice of doom, while the POTEN TATE wants to be a big shot. And, of course, there is AMPU TATE, who has always completely cut himself off from the rest of the team.

There are some good members of the team. There is FACILI TATE, who is quite happy and helpful in all matters; and delightful, pleasant, always smiling, FELICI TATE. COGI TATE and MEDI TATE always think things over and are the guiding influences on the team.

**From the original source "The Tate Family"*

There's more to teaming



Than just hooking things up

Planning and Working Together

Basic Strategies for Clear Communication Between Teacher and Paraeducator

There are a number of elements that must be present in any situation to insure clear channels of communication. Some are commonplace and generally well known. Others are things we take for granted and, if the members of the team are not careful and do not pay attention; positive communication can be inhibited. For example:

- ... The attitude and feelings of both the teacher and paraeducator need to be known, respected, and understood. Teachers and paraeducators need to deal openly with their attitudes and feelings toward their roles and duties, their attitudes toward the students they work with, their attitudes toward instructional styles and management and their attitudes toward the value of the other person's contributions. When feelings are not shared and openly communicated the nature of the relationship will not grow and the team will not be effective.
- ... An understanding of the similarities and differences between the people involved in the team must be recognized and understood ranging from different points of view about educational strategies to different values, different cultural and religious heritage, different levels of education and experience and other factors that affect the working relationship.
- ... The teacher and paraeducator should actively seek to develop and share a common vocabulary and system of non-verbal cues.
- ... The teacher must make sure that directions and expectations are clearly understood and that the paraeducator is able to perform the assigned task prior to implementing the activity in the classroom.
- ... The paraeducator must be willing to ask for clarification or assistance if the assignment is not understood.
- ... The teacher should determine what special interests, strengths, and training the paraeducator has that will complement and enhance his/her own skills and improve the delivery of instructional programs to students.
- ... The team must actively work to create a climate of cooperation, trust, respect, and loyalty by meeting regularly to discuss procedures and techniques that will establish and maintain open channels of communication.

Adapted from Pickett, A.L. (1986). A Training Program to Prepare Teachers to Supervise and Work More Effectively with Paraprofessional Personnel. New York: Center for Advanced Study in Education. City University of New York

Discussion Exercise: Personal Reflection

Exercise in self-evaluation:

A. Some things I am already good at when it comes to successful communication:

B. Some of the barriers to successful communication in my life and work are:

C. I have the following strengths which give my team energy, direction, or harmony:

D. I need to develop or improve the following traits in order to build a more successful team:

E. I could be more successful at communication if I were able to:

F. What traits of other team members are frustrating for you?

FRUSTRATING TRAITS

HOW CAN YOU CHANGE YOUR STYLE TO
COPE WITH THIS TRAIT?

G. What are some clues that another team member is frustrated with your style? What can you do differently?

CLUES

SOLUTIONS

H. What did you learn about yourself from this exercise and the Work Style Assessment?

Team Task Functions

Any team member may exhibit the following team behaviors at any time:

<u>Initiating</u>	Definition	Proposing tasks or goals, defining a team problem, suggesting a procedure or idea for solving a problem.
	Example:	"Let's write the ideas we have on the board and analyze them."
<u>Information or Opinion Seeking</u>	Definition:	Requesting facts; seeking relevant information about team concerns.
	Example:	"How many students will be in the group?"
<u>Information Giving</u>	Definition:	Offering facts; providing relevant information about team concerns.
	Example:	"In the past month, three meetings have been cancelled."
<u>Clarifying</u>	Definition:	Interpreting or reflecting ideas and suggestions; clearing up issues before the team.
	Example:	The member who says, "I think what she means is that we cannot be assured that parents will be at the meeting."
<u>Summarizing</u>	Definition:	Pulling together related ideas; restating suggestions; offering a decision or conclusion for the team to consider.
	Example:	"The following points have been made so far."
<u>Compromising</u>	Definition:	Offering to compromise one's own position; admitting error, to maintain team cohesion.
	Example:	"I appreciate Joe's idea as one way of moving us towards our goal and since we're pretty evenly divided between support for his idea and support for my idea, I'd like to withdraw mine and suggest we concentrate on developing Joe's."
<u>Gatekeeping</u>	Definition:	Keeping communication channels open; facilitating the participation of others; suggesting procedures that permit sharing remarks.
	Example:	"Ellen is trying to say something and I can't hear her."
<u>Observing</u>	Definition:	Watching how the team is operating and sharing these perceptions with the team.
	Example:	"We are getting off the subject."
<u>Consensus Testing</u>	Definition:	Checking with the team to see how much agreement has been reached, or how near the team is to a conclusion.
	Example:	"Does anyone object to our doing this?"

Team Trust Functions

Encouraging

Definition: Being friendly, warm, and responsive to others and to their contributions; showing regard for others by giving them an opportunity for recognition.

Example: "I think it's good that we started our last two meetings on time."

Expressing Team Feelings

Definition: Sensing feelings, moods, relationships within the team; sharing feelings with other members.

Example: "I think we all need a break."

Harmonizing

Definition: Attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tension; getting people to explore their differences.

Example: "Let's see where we agree."

Adapted from: Gerlach, K., Reisberg, L., 1992, Strengthening the Partnership, Communication and Team Building, 2nd Edition, Olympic ESD #114

Discussion Exercise: Team Task Functions

THINK IT THROUGH – Review the team task functions on the previous pages. Critique your own competencies and rate each item by circling 1, 2, or 3.

		I am good at this role.	I do it sometimes.	I need work on this. I'm not as competent as I'd like to be.
a)	Initiating	1	2	3
b)	Information or Opinion Seeking	1	2	3
c)	Information Giving	1	2	3
d)	Clarifying	1	2	3
e)	Summarizing	1	2	3
f)	Compromising	1	2	3
g)	Gatekeeping	1	2	3
h)	Observing	1	2	3
i)	Consensus	1	2	3
j)	Encouraging	1	2	3
k)	Expressing Team Feelings	1	2	3
l)	Harmonizing	1	2	3

Adapted from: Gerlach, K., Reisberg, L., 1992, Strengthening the Partnership, Communication and Teaming, 2nd Edition, Olympic ESD #114

Discussion Exercise: Communication Skills Worksheet

Write an example for each:

Encouraging

Encouraging is asking or indicating to the speaker that you want to know more about a topic. It encourages the other person to continue or expand.

Example: The paraeducator asks the teacher about her strategies to reinforce appropriate behavior.

Clarifying/Questioning

Clarifying is the skill of requesting more information. We can show interest in the speaker as well as ensure we understand accurately what is said by seeking clarification through questioning.

Example: The paraeducator should ask questions if their role is not clear.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is simply putting the content of the speaker's message into your own words.

Example: The paraeducator restates what the teacher has said using many of the same words used by the teacher.

Perception Checking

Perception is trying to determine the accuracy of the feeling or emotion expressed by the speaker.

Example: The paraeducator restates and asks for clarification or confirmation that the restated content is accurate and that others involved have similar perceptions of what was said.

Summarizing

Summarizing pulls together the major ideas or content of a discussion. It gives direction.

Example: After listening to a preceding conversation, the paraeducator restates several main points said by the teacher.

Validating

This positive type of feedback acknowledges the value or efforts of another individual.

Example: The paraeducator informs the teacher how she appreciated the detailed plan.

Effective Communication Techniques

Statement	Purpose	To do this ...	Examples
Encouraging	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to convey interest 2. to encourage the other person to keep on talking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... don't agree or disagree ... use neutral words ... use varying voice intonations 	"Can you tell me more?"
Clarifying	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to help you understand what is being said 2. to get more information 3. to help the speaker see other points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... ask questions ... restate 	"When did this happen?"
Paraphrase	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to show you are listening and understand 2. to check meaning and interpretation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... restate in your own words ideas and facts 	"So you would like your supervisor to trust you more?"
Reflection on Perception Checking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to show you understand how the person feels 2. to help the person evaluate their own feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... reflect the speaker's feelings 	"You seem very upset."
Summarizing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to review progress 2. to pull together important ideas and facts 3. to establish a basis for further discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... restate major ideas including feelings 	"These seem to be the key ideas."
Validating	to acknowledge the worthiness of the other person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... acknowledge the value of their issues and feelings ... show appreciation for their efforts and actions 	"I appreciate your willingness to work this out."

Can you think of other examples?



Asking Questions

It has been said that asking questions is strength, not a weakness. Paraeducators should use questions if an assignment is unclear or not enough information is provided to them. Information gathering is important for team success. Questions provide a way of requesting more information if needed. If not enough information is given about a student, a paraeducator should request information about a student's needs.

Questions are crucial at the outset of interpersonal problem solving to elicit pertinent information and they continue to be essential throughout the process for clarifying interactions and showing ideas and understanding. Skillful use of questions can mean the difference between an intervention that is successful and one fraught with miscommunications and parallel communication. (Friend, Cook, 2003)

Phrasing a question in a positive, professional way is one important skill for a paraeducator to have. Questions seek information, provide information, and clarify information. An example of a question seeking information would be:

- How many students will be in the group?
- Which program do you feel would be best for the group?

An example of a question that provides information would be:

- What do you think would happen if you asked the students parents to assist us with the program?

An example of a question that clarifies information would be:

- Are you saying that you prefer this new program over the one that was used last semester?

Asking for Assistance

Asking for assistance is strength, not weakness.

Why ask questions?

1. It stimulates the other person to communicate with you.
2. It secures fundamental information.
3. It broadens the discussion.
4. It includes additional facts.
5. It checks conclusions or challenges old ideas.
6. It clarifies thinking.
7. It is a way of getting reasoning and proof.
8. It develops new ideas.
9. It offers alternatives.
10. It facilitates decision-making or choosing between alternatives.
11. It gains agreement.
12. It obtains commitments to assure responsibilities for accomplishing a task.

When formulating questions, keep these simple rules in mind:

- make them short
- make them easily understood
- avoid leading questions
- avoid the question, "Why?" if at all possible
- avoid double questions
- don't bombard
- use open questions

REMEMBER – You have the right to ask questions if directions are not clear.

Discussion Exercise: Asking Questions

Pair up with another workshop participant. In the space provided below write a concern, any concern. The statement should be vague so that questions can be asked. After both participants have written their concern, take turns asking questions. Try to frame your questions so that they are open.

Situation:

Your Concern:

What questions could be asked?

**BETTER TO ASK TWICE
THAN TO LOSE YOUR
WAY ONCE**

Sample Meeting Topics and Questions for the Beginning of the School Year

Time:

When will the paraeducator assist the teacher with instruction?
Where will the paraeducator deliver the instruction?
What is the time frame for the lesson/activity?

Roles:

What students will the paraeducator work with?
What will be the format of the teacher-designed lesson plans?
Who will prepare materials?
What is the role of the teacher?
What is the role of the paraeducator?

Management:

When will the paraeducator and teacher plan together?
How will training in the instructional approach be provided?
How and when will feedback be provided?
What other responsibilities will the paraeducator have and is there time to complete them?

Curriculum and Instruction:

How is the lesson to be taught?
What is the instructional style?
What skills and knowledge are necessary to teach it that way?
What is the behavior management strategy to be followed?
What is to be used to provide reinforcement and feedback to the students?
What curriculum materials are to be used?
What data will be collected on student progress and what procedures will be used?

Can you think of other discussion topics or questions?

Key Topics That Need to be Discussed with the Paraeducator at the Beginning of the Year

1. Introductions.
2. Orientation to the school or agency's philosophy of education, rules and regulations.
3. Introduction to the teacher's short and long range plans for the class.
4. Discussion of the teacher's daily and weekly teaching schedules.
5. Discussion of expected lesson plan format.
6. Discussion of procedural matters (discipline, checking pupil's work, turning in lesson plans, planning future conferences, etc.).
7. Discussion of paraeducators role in the teacher's classroom.
8. Clarification of the paraeducators expectations and goals for himself/herself.
9. Discussion of the paraeducators self-concept of strengths and weaknesses pertaining to this and other experiences.
10. Discussion of the kinds of training needed by the paraeducator.
11. Provision for planning a program of early observations, structured support (mentoring), and independent support role activities.
12. Discussion of evaluation criteria that will be used to assess the paraeducators work performance.

Adapted from: Gerlach, K "Let's Team Up," 2007, NEA Professional Library

Feedback

Types and Guidelines

Feedback is the open and respectful sharing of the impact one individual's behavior is having on another. Feedback provides each of us with information to help us understand how our actions affect others and how others perceive our actions. Feedback is communication that supports personal growth. Personal growth supports team development. Feedback given in a timely fashion helps individuals or teams deal with concerns while they are at a manageable level instead of letting them go unspoken, simmering until they become a major issue.

Feedback can be motivated by three different agendas. Effective teams use all three to support open communication, provide encouragement, and promote problem solving.

Types of Feedback

Positive Feedback: Positive feedback is motivated by the desire to acknowledge and encourage positive and desired behaviors. This type of feedback says, "I appreciated what you did. Thank you." This type of feedback's agenda is to encourage repetition of the behaviors. Positive feedback is also known as praise.

Neutral Feedback: Neutral feedback is information that helps another person look at their behavior and make their own decision about whether to continue or change their behavior. The sender of the feedback makes no judgment about the receiver's behavior. The receiver *constructs* his or her own conclusions.

Negative Feedback: Discomfort or displeasure with another person's behavior motivates negative feedback. The behavior of one person is having a negative impact on another person. The agenda of negative feedback is to discourage or change the behavior or invite discussion and problem solving. The timing, the choice of words, and how the feedback is shared is key to the receiver hearing the feedback in a way that allows open communication to continue. Negative feedback will often be perceived as criticism. It is the most challenging type of feedback to both give and receive.

Guidelines for Giving Feedback

The person giving feedback to another person has a responsibility to thoughtfully frame their feedback so it is honest, respectful, and driven by the desire to improve a situation or working relationship. Keeping the following guidelines in mind and modeling them in practice will increase the probability that the feedback exchange will result in positive outcomes for all involved. Above all else, feedback must be focused on specific behaviors (what is seen and/or heard) and describing, not labeling those behaviors. Successful feedback considers the needs of both the sender and receiver. In addition the sender should:

- Use an “I” statement to accept responsibility for own perceptions and feelings, speak for self;
- Avoid absolutes such as always or never;
- Share information (what, when and where) without drawing inferences about motive (why);
- Focus on current behaviors, not past history;
- Deal only with behaviors over which the receiver has control;
- Consider the timing by making sure there is time for the receiver to respond and that the communication exchange can be completed;
- Avoid overloading by working on only one issue at a time;
- Be sure his/her intent is to strengthen the relationship or solve a problem, not retaliate or get even;
- Be clear in letting the receiver know the specific impact their behavior has had; and
- Offer alternatives not a predetermined solution.

Giving feedback is often uncomfortable. It is better to honestly own your discomfort than to remain silent and let a concern ferment. If you are feeling especially awkward or nervous, you may want to plan and rehearse your feedback.

Guidelines for Receiving Feedback

Effective communication is a two-way process. Information must be sent *and* received. It is important that team members are able not only to provide feedback, but also to hear feedback that focuses on their behaviors. As the receiver of feedback, it may be helpful to consider the following guidelines:

- Accept compliments gracefully. Do not deny or discredit positive feedback. All that is necessary is a simple response of “Thank you.”
- When you request feedback, be specific in describing the behavior on which you want the feedback to focus.
- Stay open. Try not to defend or rationalize the behavior at issue.
- If you are not clear about the message, ask for more information including specific examples.
- Summarize your understanding of the feedback. Acknowledging that you have heard the feedback does not mean that you agree, but it will support clear and open communication.
- Speak for self. Use “I” statements to share your own thoughts and feelings about the feedback.
- Stay open to considering that the description of the impact of your behavior is accurate, even though that impact was not your intent.
- Use the feedback as an opportunity for personal growth, clarification of behavior with another, or problem solving.

Steps to Problem Solving

Step One: Identifying and Describing the Problem

A situation must be clearly understood before it can be dealt with. It is not always easy to put a problem into words, but if it cannot be stated clearly, it will be impossible to choose a course of action that will lead to a satisfactory solution. Each person should describe the problem in his/her own words and from his/her own point of view. This may be done by asking and answering these questions. What is the problem? Who is involved? Who is affected? How are they affected?

Step Two: Defining and Determining the Causes of the Problem

It is not enough to identify the problem. It is essential to determine what causes the problem to exist and to persist. For example, the problem may be caused by "outside conditions" (contractual agreements, a lack of financial resources) that the team may have little ability to change, or it may have its roots in a lack of understanding the distinction between the roles and duties of the teacher and paraeducator. Other factors that may influence how a problem is defined may include differences in values and attitudes, age, work experience and education, cultural heritage, and other personal traits. It is important that the real problem is separated from surface events and those areas of agreement and disagreement is identified.

Step Three: Deciding on a Goal and Identifying Alternative Solutions

Once the problem has been identified, then strategies can be developed. The primary question that needs to be asked and answered is "what do we want to achieve and how can we go about achieving it?" By working together and brainstorming a list of alternative solutions to the problem, the team members will have several options that will enable them to choose a course of action with which they can live. It will also enable them to determine what additional information, physical or human resources, skills or knowledge they will need to carry out the solution and whether or not these resources are essential to achieving the goal.

Step Four: Selecting and Implementing a Course of Action

To make a decision about which course of action will be tried; the teacher and paraeducator should decide which solution is most likely to get the desired results. Agreeing on a solution is not enough. The team must try it out and test it to see if it will work. They must also give it enough time to see if the solutions will work since behaviors and new skills cannot be changed over night.

Step Five: Evaluating the Results

"Has the problem been resolved? Is there progress? If not – why not? Should we try another one of the alternatives? Should we ask for assistance from other sources? All of these are types of questions that will need to be addressed in order to assess the effectiveness of the process.

Using the problem-solving steps, define a problem you are currently experiencing and develop a Plan of Action.

Discussion Exercise: Problem Solving

1. Select a problem or issue your team is currently dealing with.
2. Select a facilitator to lead your team through the six steps of the Problem Solving Process.
Use good communication skills.

Step 1: Identify the problem (be specific; note who, what, when, how, and where)

Step 2: Generate solutions (brainstorm)

Step 3: Evaluate and rate each solution

Step 4: Decide on a mutually acceptable solution (use consensus)

Step 5: Develop a thorough plan implementing the solution

Step 6: Determine a method to evaluate the success of your plan

Adapted from: Gerlach, K., Reisberg, L., 1992, Strengthening the Partnership, Communication and Teaming, 2nd Edition, Olympic ESD #114

Responding to Conflict

Conflicts your team may encounter are influenced significantly by the organization and administration of your school (Goldman, 1998, Kosmoski & Pollack, 2000). Conflict occurs in any working relationship. In education settings, conflicts may arise at any point. Educational personnel working together may often experience conflict as a result of opposing ideas, unclear goals, and confusion over roles or behavior management strategies. For example, a teacher and paraeducator might have different beliefs about the level of support a student needs to be successfully integrated into the regular classroom. The teacher might feel that the student needs to do his work more independently and the paraeducator feels he is not ready for independent work. The teacher feels the paraeducator is hanging over him and assisting him more than necessary. When such disagreement occurs, it is important that the conflict is resolved. In problem solving a series of steps called conflict resolution strategies should be followed.

Step 1 – Pause and Reflect

The first step to resolve conflicts is to step back and think about the situation. Stepping back from the situations will offer each person the chance of a new perspective and prevent the conflict from escalating.

Step 2 – Identify the Conflict

It is important to recognize what the source of the conflict is. In order for this to take place it must be done in a thoughtful manner. When that happens there is a better chance that the resolution will be effective and that the conflict will be addressed.

Step 3 – Determine What Part You Play in the Conflict

Thomas & Kilman (1974) identified five typical responses to conflict: avoidance, accommodating, compromise, competition, and collaboration. Each of these responses can contribute to productive conflict resolution. This step is the time for individuals involved in the conflict to analyze what part they have in it.

Step 4 – Determine the Various Options

At this step, it is necessary to determine the alternatives available. In addition you need to consider and evaluate the potential for success offered by the different options. The team can then decide if they should let things continue, address the issue with those involved, develop a new way of thinking about the conflict, or use the problem solving approach discussed earlier.

Step 5 – Choose the Best Option or Strategy

After an evaluation where the team analyzes the benefits/strengths, liabilities, or weaknesses of the different choices, the team would then choose the one most likely to resolve the conflict effectively.

Step 6 – Develop an Action Plan

Make a plan to take whatever steps are necessary to implement your choice. Putting the plan into action is the final and most important step.

If the team follows these six steps, it is possible for the conflict to be resolved, and the result will be the development of a more trusting and respectful approach for dealing with conflicts.

*From Pickett, A.L., Gerlach, K.P. – Paraeducators in the Schools (2006), Pro*ed, Austin, TX*

An Action Agenda for Improving Trust

- Clarify role responsibilities in the meeting (facilitator, recorder, secretary, group members);
- Build and demonstrate understanding of other's ideas by paraphrasing and asking clarifying questions;
- Share feedback on team dynamics during the meeting or during a debrief activity;
- Problem solve areas of team growth;
- Be aware of and problem solve subgroups, cliques, or other divisions with the team that hinder open and accurate communication;
- Surface and problem solve hidden agendas;
- Expect and support all team members in participating during meetings;
- Manage interpersonal skills;
- Celebrate effective and trust building team behaviors;
- Focus on gains and solutions, not losses and problems;
- Keep everyone informed;
- Fully share thoughts and feelings rather than remaining silent, encourage others to do the same;
- Respect confidential information;
- Be dependable, follow-through on all commitments;
- Pitch in and help other team members who need assistance;
- Be sensitive and respond to nonverbal clues that suggest a lack of openness; and
- Focus on "we" not "me."

--Connie Hoffman, Vista Associates

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Discussion Exercise: Time Management

Activity

Discuss time saving strategies for your team.

Discuss how these strategies help.

List ways you could improve your time management strategies.

Fifty Team Time Management Tips for Team Success

By Kent Gerlach, Ed.D.

Commit yourself to being part of the team. Asking for assistance is strength, not a weakness.

1. Emphasize cooperation, not competition. To get more teamwork, show appreciation to your supervisors who give clear, concise directions and instructions.
2. Approach time from a team standpoint, remembering that people perceive time differently. Develop an ongoing dialog on how best to use team time.
3. Take time to communicate effectively. This involves being a good listener as well as a good talker. Good communication saves time in the long run and prevents many problems.
4. Improve your own methods of planning and coordinating projects and activities.
5. Be patient with others. Start earlier and allow more lead-time.
6. Discuss objectives, priorities and plans with others.
7. Set aside regular time slots for talking with your supervisor and other team members.
8. Analyze everything you do and look for ways to improve. The more ideas you collect, the more likely you are to improve.
9. Look for ways to save time for the people you work with.
10. Make sure your meetings with supervisors and team members are productive. Meet with a clear purpose. Follow an agenda or outline. Think of questions ahead of time.
11. Develop the on-time habit. Show up for meetings and appointments on time, deliver work on time, make sure that others never have to wait for you and encourage others to do the same.
12. Practice the Golden Rule: Treat other people the way you would like to be treated. Show appreciation and help your team by being more generous with your praise than with your criticism.
13. Be a mentor to other team members.
14. Take time to write down and clarify your goals and expectations. You might want to focus on one or two projects at a time by setting priorities.
15. Learn to make realistic time estimates.
16. Interrupt others less. Every little thought that pops into your head doesn't have to be communicated immediately to others. Write these thoughts down to discuss later.
17. Pay attention when people talk to you. Devote time to seeking the opinions of others and learning from them.
18. Compete less and cooperate more. By learning to work with others, you can accomplish far more than you could ever accomplish alone.
19. Slow down a little. Don't be so demanding of yourself and others.
20. Finish what you start before jumping to something else. Leaving a string of unfinished tasks behind you creates problems for everyone on your time.
21. Don't use interruptions as an excuse for letting your mind wander. Train yourself to get right back to the task when the interruption is over.
22. Focus on developing the on-time habit. There is nothing more productive than the last minute. Stress the importance of deadlines.
23. Discuss with your supervisor ways to improve communication and accountability.
24. Set aside 5-10 minutes a day for simple planning. Plan at the same time every day.
25. Once the team has developed a plan, stick to it. Remember that your supervisor is counting on you to follow the plan.
26. Curb your socializing time.
27. Simplify the necessary but mundane chores as much as possible.
28. Organize your workspace.

29. Respect others' rights. Learn to be sensitive so you'll avoid becoming offensive.
30. Learn to set goals.
31. Stop procrastinating. Break large jobs down into smaller pieces and then focus on one piece at a time.
32. Learn the positive, that planned change will make your life better. Change doesn't have to be frightening.
33. Use "post-it" notes.
34. Try to be a self-starter.
35. Speak up more. Your opinion is valuable. Don't keep your questions to yourself.
36. Pay attention to deadlines. Don't be obsessed with them, but don't forget them either.
37. Learn that perfectionism has its limits. Remember that it's important to do your best, not to be perfect.
38. Realize the value of a positive attitude.
39. Be sure your goals are realistic.
40. Set time limits on your tasks.
41. Learn to be more tolerant of others.
42. Set goals. What are your long-term goals? Consider all aspects of your life: professional, personal, social, family, and community.
43. Establish your priorities. Which of your goals are most important? Separate your goals into those of high value, moderate value, and low value.
44. Analyze present time use. Are you using your time to reach your high priority goals? Keep a log or journal for a few days and see.
45. Eliminate time wasters. Spend your time on priority tasks that lead to high priority goals.
46. Recognize the difference between "urgent" and "important." Urgent tasks are those that demand immediate completion; they may or may not lead to your high priority goals.
47. Don't procrastinate. Instead, break large tasks into smaller manageable tasks. Begin the smaller task immediately. Begin with high-priority tasks. Completion of these tasks will ream the most benefit; low priority tasks may be postponed.
48. Make a daily list of things to do. Make one list and update it daily; be sure to assign priority to every item on the list.
49. Use written notes to a supervisor to summarize the day (how the lesson or activities went).
50. Use email and text messages.

Can you think of other time management strategies that will make you and your team more effective and organized?

Effective Teams: A Checklist for Managing Time

- ☐ 1. Commit yourself to being part of the team.
- ☐ 2. Emphasize cooperation, not competition.
- ☐ 3. Focus on team and student outcomes.
- ☐ 4. Accentuate and build team strengths.
- ☐ 5. Approach time from a team standpoint, remembering that different people perceive time differently. Develop an ongoing dialogue on how best to use team time.
- ☐ 6. Take time to communicate effectively. This involves being a good listener as well as a good talker.
- ☐ 7. When instructing others, be sure to provide complete information and clear instructions. Check to be sure your teammates really understand everything.
- ☐ 8. Improve team methods of planning and coordinating projects and activities.
- ☐ 9. Give team members plenty of advance notice for team meetings, deadlines, etc.
- ☐ 10. Make sure expectations are reasonable and clear.
- ☐ 11. Discuss goals, objectives, priorities, and plans with team members.
- ☐ 12. Make sure team members are well informed.
- ☐ 13. Set aside regular time slots for meeting with team members.
- ☐ 14. Ask team members for ideas on how to improve team relationships and roles.
- ☐ 15. Look for ways to save time for the people you work with.
- ☐ 16. Follow a written agenda to make sure your team meetings are productive.
- ☐ 17. Show up for meetings and assignments on time.

Adapted from *Let's Team Up*, Gerlach, K., 2009, NEA Publications

Paraeducator Daily Schedule

Week of: _____

Day: _____

DAILY SCHEDULE			
Time	Student(s)	Comments	Supervisor (location)

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Daily Schedule

Week of: _____

Paraeducator: _____

Supervisor: _____

	Student(s)	Comments	Supervisor (location)
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

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Paraeducator Classroom Information

General Education Teacher: _____

Special Education Teacher: _____

Number of Students in the Classroom: _____

Classroom schedule:

Classroom rules (List the classroom rules):

Consequences for not following rules:

Classroom discipline (Who is responsible for classroom discipline? What is the discipline plan?
Will all students use the same discipline plan? What are the rewards and consequences?):

Other pertinent information:

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Curriculum Modifications

Sample Student Worksheet

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Team Members: (persons responsible for modifications)

Step 1: Inform about students, with a focus on student strengths

Step 2: List the goals for the student

Step 3: Ideas and strategies for modifications (this should come from the supervisor and/or general education supervisor)

Textbook Modifications:

Daily Assignments:

Written Language:

Spelling:

Mathematics:

Organizational Skills:

Directions:

Classroom Assessments:

Classroom Behavior:

Other Areas of Concern:

Textbook: _____ Daily Assignments: _____

Written Language: _____ Spelling: _____

Mathematics: _____ Organizational Skills: _____

Directions: _____ Group Instruction: _____

Assessments: _____ Behavior: _____

Other: _____

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Regular Classroom Schedule

Name _____

School Year _____

Supervisor _____

Regular Classroom Schedule

I will be working in the regular classroom with the following teachers:

Regular Classroom Teacher	Day and Times/Periods	Room #	Targeted Students
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

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Daily Communication

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Daily notes or comments: _____

Paraeducator: _____

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Discussion Exercise: Improving Communication

Discuss ways your team can communicate with one another that are not face-to-face meetings. *Note memo example below:*

Playground Assistant Form

MEMO TO SUPERVISOR

_____ has been having problems on the playground.
(Student)

Description of the problem:

How I have handled the problem:

Name of Playground Assistant: _____ Date: _____

Discussion Exercise: Our Team's IEP

Team or Program _____

Name of Team Members:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

School: _____

Date: _____

Summary of Present Level of Performance:

Team Strengths:

Team Weaknesses:

Long-term Goals:

Short-term Goals:

Criteria for Evaluation of Annual Goals:

Team Members Present (sign off):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Discussion Exercise: Action Plan

Now that you have completed this workshop, how do you plan to share the information you have learned with your colleagues (administration, teachers, paraeducators, others)?

Develop a Team Action Plan:

1. Decide what you want to (need to) do in order to improve your team performance (problem identification and goal).

2. How will this improve the organization and operation of your team?

3. Describe some of the steps (solutions) you will use to achieve your objective.

4. Decide where, when, and how you will implement the solution you select.

5. Other.

**WHAT APPEARS TO BE
THE END
MAY REALLY BE
THE BEGINNING**

GOOD LUCK!

Do We Have as Much Sense as a Goose?

This fall when you see geese heading South for the winter, flying along in a “V” formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about the way they fly. It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. (People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.)

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. (If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going.) When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. (It pays to take turns doing hard jobs – with people or with geese flying South!) These geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep their speed. (What do we say when we honk from behind?)

Finally, (Now I want you to get this) when a goose gets sick or is wounded by a gunshot and falls out, two geese fall out of formation and follow it down and protect it. They stay with the goosed until it is either able to fly or until it is dead. They then launch out on their own, or with another formation, to catch up with their group. (If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.)

-- Author Unknown

Workshop Quotes

Together we can change.
Together we can succeed.

--Unknown

You become successful by helping others
become successful.

--Unknown

TEAM BUILDING: What affects everyone
can best be solved by everyone.

--Unknown

To accept good advice from others is but to
increase one's own ability.

--Unknown

World's greatest management principle: You
can work miracles by having faith in others.
To get the best out of people, choose to think
and believe the best about them

--Unknown

To promote cooperation, remember: People
tend to resist that which is forced upon them.
People tend to support that which they help to
create.

--Vice Pfaff

In true teams people mentor each other
unselfishly.

--Kent Gerlach

REMINDER: We are in this together.
Asking assistance is strength, not a weakness.

--Kent Gerlach

No matter what accomplishments you make,
somebody helps you.

--Wilma Rudolph

The best team doesn't win nearly as often as
the team that gets along the best.

--Dr. Robert Gilbert

Everyone has an invisible sign hanging from
their neck that reads: Make me feel important!
Never forget this message when working with
others.

--Kent Gerlach

I've learned one important thing about living,
I can do anything I think I can – but I can't do
anything alone. No one can go it alone.
Create your team!

--Dr. Robert Schuller

Coming together, sharing together, working
together, succeeding together.

--Unknown

The main ingredient of stardom is the rest of
the team.

--Joan Wooden

If everyone is moving forward together, then
the success takes care of itself.

--Henry Ford

Teamwork divides the task and doubles the
success.

--Unknown

Respect, recognition, trust and shared values
are the unifying forces of a team.

--Unknown

Team success and individual success can be
synonymous.

--Unknown

It takes two wings for a bird to fly.

--Jesse Jackson

Team leadership impacts team performance.

--Unknown

No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an
orchestra to play it.

--H E Luccock

A team without goals is just another
ineffective committee.

--Unknown

A team leader must set an example for others
to follow.

--Unknown

If you are not participating, you are not on the
team.

--Unknown

Our future will be a reflection of our teamwork

--Unknown

A team will out-perform a group of individuals every time.

--Unknown

Successful teams build on the strengths of individual team members.

--Kent Gerlach

Team spirit evolves over time. Develop your team spirit

--Kent Gerlach

NOTICE:

This building requires no physical fitness program: Everyone gets enough exercise ... jumping to conclusions, flying off the handle, running down others, dodging responsibility, and pushing their luck.

--Unknown

None of us is as smart as all of us.

People rarely succeed at anything unless they have fun doing it.

Together everyone achieves more.

The best way to get a good idea is to get a lot of ideas.

Nothing great or lasting can happen without enthusiasm.

--Kent Gerlach

Whose Job is it?

This is a story about four people named

EVERYBODY,
SOMEBODY,
ANYBODY, and
NOBODY

There was an important job to be done and EVERYBODY was asked to do it.

EVERBODY was sure SOMEBODY did it.
SOMEBODY got angry about that because it was EVERYBODY'S job.

EVERYBODY thought that ANYBODY could do it but NOBODY realized that EVERYBODY wouldn't do it.

It ended up that EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY when NOBODY did what ANYBODY could have done.

Author Unknown

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Team Building

Words of Wisdom

Help each other be right, not wrong.

Look for ways to make new ideas work, not for reasons they won't.

If in doubt, check it out. Don't make negative assumptions about each other.

Help each other be successful, and take pride in each other's success.

Speak positively about each other and about your school and educational programs at every opportunity.

Maintain a positive mental attitude no matter what the circumstances.

Act with initiative and courage, as if it all depends on you.

If you need assistance ... ASK ... mentor one another.

Do everything with enthusiasm: it's contagious!

**Don't lose Faith.
Enjoy what you do!**

HAVE FUN!

— Kent Gerlach, Ed.D.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

KENT GERLACH, Ed.D.

Dr. Kent Gerlach is a Professor in the Department of Instructional Development and Leadership at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. Kent has presented staff development workshops for teachers, administrators, and paraeducators throughout the United States and Canada. He has served as a keynote presenter at many professional conferences and meetings, and has presented workshops on teaming, collaboration, and effective school research for numerous local and state educational agencies. In addition, he has been recognized nationally for his contributions, research, and publications on paraeducator issues including their supervision, employment, and training. Kent co-authored the texts "Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings: A Team Approach," and "Paraeducators in School Settings," both published by Pro-ed Publishers. Kent is also the author of "Let's Team Up: A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers and Principals," published by the National Education Association and the Council for Exceptional Children. In addition, he has authored several journal articles, book chapters, and staff development materials dealing with collaboration and team building, and the legal and ethical issues affecting the roles of paraeducators and their supervisors. Kent is the recipient of several teaching awards, including the PLU Faculty Achievement Award and PLU Teaching Excellence Award. Recently Kent resided in Washington, DC where he served as a consultant to several organizations including Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), National Education Association (NEA), the IDEA Partnerships, and the U.S. Department of Education. He has held faculty appointments at the University of Washington (Seattle), University of Hawaii, Augustana College (Sioux Falls), and the University of Texas at Austin. Currently he serves on the Editorial Board of the Council for Learning Disabilities, the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Developmental Disabilities, and the Council for Exceptional Children's Teacher Education Division. He also serves on the Editorial Boards of the Thompson Publishing Group, Title One Monitor, and serves as a consultant to the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for Washington State.

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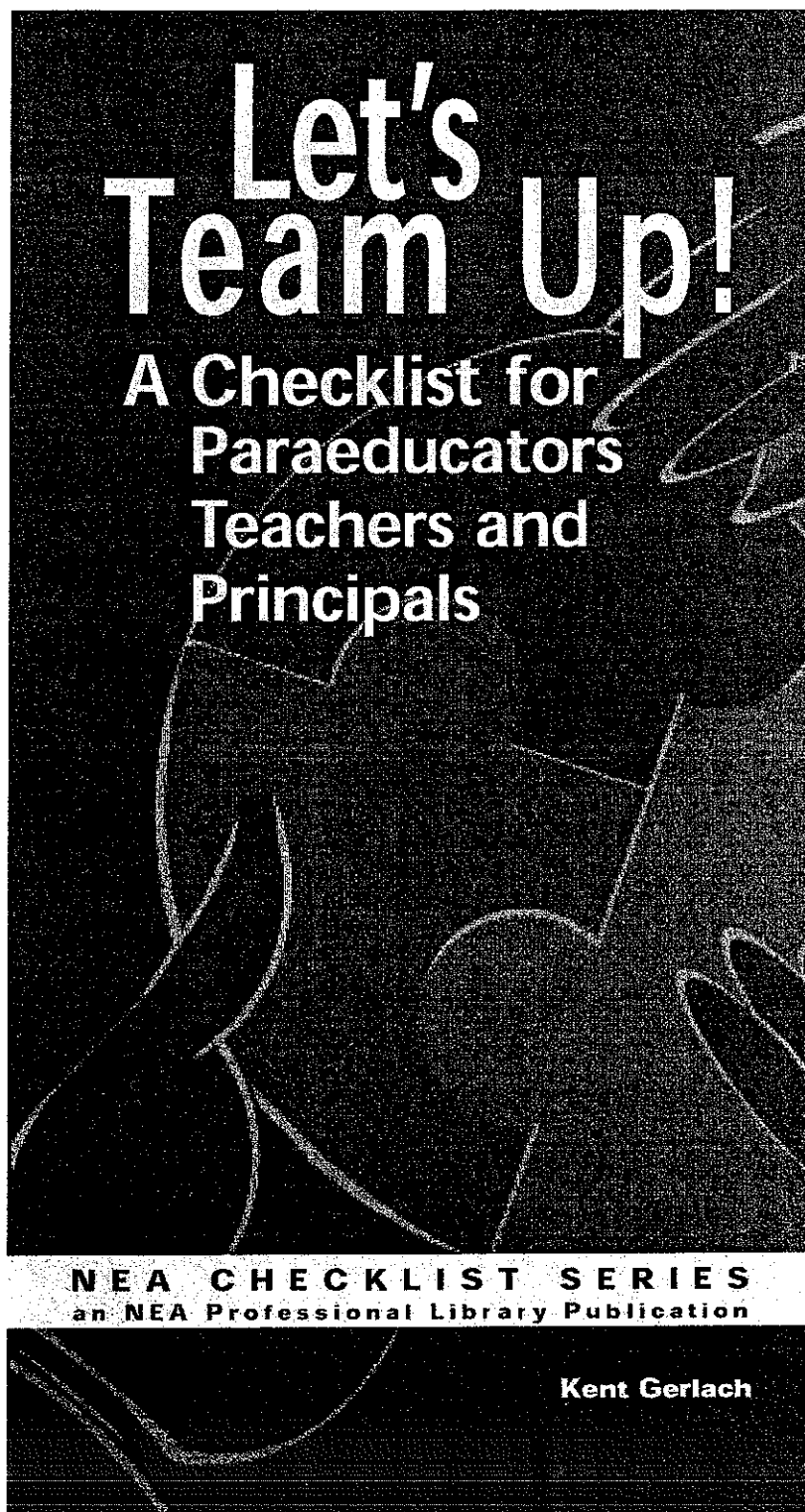
Let's Team Up: A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers, and Principals

By Kent Gerlach

Teachers alone cannot meet the needs of all students. As schools change, the role of paraeducators has become increasingly important. That's why an effective school team is more critical than ever before. Increased workloads, larger class sizes, and the inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms are just some of the factors that contribute to a growing recognition of paraeducators' vital contribution to enhanced student achievement. This unique checklist is written to help paraeducators, teachers, and principals understand their roles and responsibilities as they relate to each other. It's filled with helpful tips for teachers on working effectively with paraeducators, practical suggestions for paraeducators on clarifying their jobs and their relationships with students and school staff, and great advice for principals on the administrative supervision of paraeducators. When every member of the school team is successful, the entire school wins.

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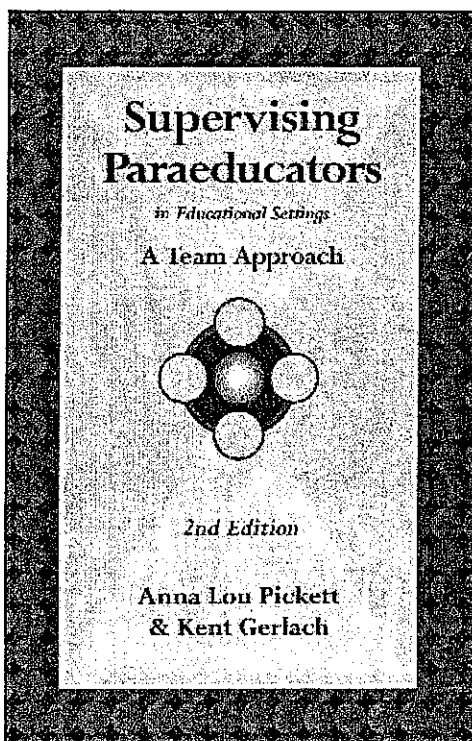
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Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings: A Team Approach, Second Edition

Anna Lou Pickett • Kent Gerlach

The popular *Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings* is now in its second edition. This book provides teachers, speech-language pathologists, administrators, and physical and occupational therapists with the skills and knowledge necessary to work more effectively with paraeducators.

You'll find guidelines and strategies for school professionals to better direct and manage the work of paraeducators. The contribution paraeducators make to the delivery of education services, the need for role clarification, effective supervision and management, good communication strategies, and teamwork are all discussed in this highly practical book.



Contents

- 1 Paraeducators in Educational Settings: Framing the Issues
- 2 Team Roles in Classrooms and Other Learning Environments
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